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Message Text

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20
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 DRC-01 /078 W
---------- 092145
O R 140809Z JAN 74
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7269
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
CINCPAC
CDR USSAG NKP
CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN
SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0308

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, TH, LA
SUBJECT: AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REF: SECDEF 8297, PARA 6

1. STARS AND STRIPES JANUARY 12 AND BANGKOK POST
JANUARY 13, CARRIED ITEMS ATTRIBUTING TO USAF SOURCES,
INCLUDING COMMANDING GENERAL OF 13TH ADVON, STATEMENTS
THAT USAF AIRCRAFT CARRIED OUT REGULAR RECONNAISSANCE
MISSIONS OVER LAOS. THESE ITEMS WERE FILED BOTH BY AP
AND UPI. WE EXPECT THAT DOD AND STATE DEPARTMENT
SPOKESMEN WOULD RECEIVE QUESTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT IN
LIGHT OF CLEAR-CUT PROHIBITION AGAINST AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE
FOUND IN ARTICLE 14 (A-B) OF SEPTEMBER 14 LAO PROTOCOL.

2. ON JANUARY 11, AP CORRESPONDENT CALLED THIS EMBASSY
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TO ASK FOR USG POSITION ON AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE OVER

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LAOS. EMBASSY OFFICER REPLIED THAT "USG DOES NOT COMMENT ON AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE." THIS STATEMENT WAS BASED ON DOD SPOKESMAN STATEMENT IN REFERENCE MESSAGE. NEWSMAN SAID HE HAD RAISED QUESTION AT RLG SPOKESMAN OUDAY SOUVANNAVONG'S REGULAR WEEKLY PRESS CONFERENCE JANUARY 10 AND LATTER HAD TOLD HIM TO REFER QUESTION TO "THE AMERICANS."

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AUTHORIZATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO USAF POSSIBLY VIA CINCPAC PIO IN BANGKOK TO BRIEF NEWSMEN ON OPERATIONS CONDUCTED FROM THAI BASED PROVIDED INFORMATION DOES NOT GO BEYOND INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY MADE AVAILABLE BY DOD. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT AUTHORITY WAS GRANTED TO ADMIT ON THE RECORD TO USAF AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE OVER LAOS. WE HAVE RECEIVED NO INFORMATION REGARDING THIS PRESS POLICY AND FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT DISCUSSION ON THE RECORD OF AMERICAN FLIGHTS OVER LAOS WOULD BE AUTHORIZED WITHOUT OUR EVEN BEING INFORMED. OBVIOUSLY THIS ACTIVITY IS WELL KNOWN BUT WE BELIEVE A DISTINCTION SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN CONJECTURAL OR BACKGROUND STORIES AND FORMAL STATEMENTS ON THE RECORD BY HIGH RANKING USAF OFFICERS STATING CATEGORICALLY THAT WE ARE VIOLATING LAO AIR SPACE.

4. IT IS ALMOST TOO OBVIOUS TO BEAR REPETITION BUT THIS TYPE OF STATEMENT
ONLY PLACES PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA IN A DIFFICULT POSITION BUT MAY WELL RESULT IN HIS HAVING TO REQUEST PUBLICLY THAT RECONNAISSANCE ACTIVITY BE DISCONTINUED. THIS MISSION HAS BEEN CORRESPONDING WITH WASHINGTON FOR MANY WEEKS WITH REGARD TO THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE AND IT IS BOTH DISAPPOINTING AND IRRITATING TO FIND STATEMENTS OF THIS KIND BEING AUTHORIZED WITH NEITHER OUR KNOWLEDGE NOR OUR CONCURRENCE. THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE THIS WHOLE PROBLEM IS TO GO AHEAD AND DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE AND AVOID DISCUSSION OF RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS. IT IS HARD TO SEE WHAT ANYONE THOUGHT WOULD BE GAINED BY AUTHORIZING THE KIND OF STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE NOW BEEN MADE. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT OUR BUSINESS TO SAY SO I WONDER WHETHER EMBASSY BANGKOK IS ENCHANTED WITH THESE STATEMENTS
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AND SOMEONE'S DECISION TO MAKE THEM AT THIS TIME.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING SOONEST THE GUIDANCE WHICH HAS APPARENTLY BEEN GIVEN TO CINCPAC AND ITS PIO. THIS MISSION WILL CONTINUE TO DECLINE TO REPLY TO QUESTIONS ON AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Errors: N/A
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740142/aaaabnuf.tel
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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD
TAGS: PINR, MOPS, TH, LA, US
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